



COURSE SYLLABUS

OLIGARCHS

Professor

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY

David Lingelbach (BS, MS, MIT; PhD, Exeter) is a Professor of Entrepreneurship at The University of Baltimore. He is the author (with Valentina Rodríguez Guerra) of *The Oligarchs' Grip: Fusing Wealth and Power* (2023). David has been awarded Fulbrights to Myanmar and Colombia and nominated twice for a Carnegie Fellowship. Prior to becoming an academic, he worked in international finance and development, including as CEO of Bank of America's businesses in the former Soviet Union and President of the first venture capital fund in post-communist Russia.

INTRODUCTION/COURSE DESCRIPTION

Oligarchs are some of the most controversial, consequential, complex, and poorly understood figures in global business and politics. They generate important economic and political outcomes, the origin story of which deserves to be better understood by businesses, NGOs, and ordinary citizens.

This course seeks to open up the black box of the oligarch phenomenon, enabling students to understand how these actors make decisions, gain wealth and power, and increasingly dominate our world. The course focuses on the oligarch process as seen through the lives of 16 oligarchs active around the world from 1946 to the present.

This course will be of interest to both undergraduate and graduate students, particularly 1) business, economics, finance, and management students who may interact with oligarchs and their structures during their careers, 2) political science and public policy students who wish to complement and enrich their understanding of the processes through which wealth, income, and power inequality are generated, and 3) others who wish to participate in a more informed way as citizens in their countries' political dialogues.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, participants should be able to:

- Describe how oligarchs think and act to acquire wealth and power, and transform one into the other.
- Apply the oligarch's process in a series of case study-based decisions and a live team-based simulation.
- Create, manage, and add value to a simulated oligarch "team" with participants from different backgrounds

COURSE METHODOLOGY

The course employs a mixture of learning strategies, including short lectures, discussion, case studies, and a final simulation structured around a complex, contemporary oligarch-related decision. At least one guest speaker with oligarch expertise will also participate in the course.

EVALUATION SYSTEM

Four case study writeups	40% (10% each)
Team formation	10%
Final exam	20%
Team-based simulation	20%
Class participation	10%

COURSE PREREQUISITES

None